

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02  
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-07  
PRS-01 L-03 H-01 /081 W  
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P R 011540Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6010  
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 1873

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PDEV RH US UK UR YO  
SUBJ: THE SOVIET VIEW OF THE RHODESIAN NEGOTIATIONS

SUMMARY: IN CONVERSATIONS THIS WEEK, THE SOVIET AND YUGOSLAV  
AMBASSADORS IN LUSAKA INDICATED SUPPORT FOR THE  
RHODESIAN NEGOTIATIONS NOW UNDERWAY AND RECOGNITION THAT  
CARRYING THE MILITARY EFFORT TOO FAR COULD LEAD TO SERIOUS  
COMPLICATIONS, INCLUDING ARMED CONFLICT BETWEEN THE  
NATIONALISTS WHICH WOULD BE IN NO ONE'S INTEREST. IN THE  
EMBASSY'S VIEW, THE SOVIETS WOULD LIKE TO AVOID A REPETITION  
OF THEIR EXPERIENCE IN ANGOLA WHERE THEIR CONTROL IS LIMITED,  
THEY ARE INVOLVED IN AN OPEN-ENDED MILITARY OPERATION WITH A  
MINORITY GROUP, AND WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN LEFT WITH BURDENSOME  
RESPONSIBILITIES IN AN ECONOMICALLY IMPOVERISHED, POLITICALLY  
DIVIDED NATION. WE BELIEVE THEY MAY BE WARY OF ONCE AGAIN

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BACKING TO FAR A MINORITY GROUP WHICH COULD LEAD THEM INTO  
SUPPORT FOR AN UNDESIRABLE MILITARY VENTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN LUSAKA VASILY SOLODOVNIKOV  
ASKED TO SEE ME TO DISCUSS THE RHODESIAN NEGOTIATIONS.  
IN RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST, I REVIEWED PROGRESS OF THE  
CONSULTATIVE GROUP'S EFFORTS TO THIS POINT IN GENERAL

TERMS. I SAID THAT THERE WERE TWO WAYS IN WHICH THE RHODESIAN QUESTION WILL ULTIMATELY BE SETTLED: EITHER THROUGH NATIONALIST MILITARY VICTORY AND SURRENDER BY THE SMITH REGIME, OR THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS. IF IT WAS THE FORMER, I SAW LITTLE PROSPECT FOR A NON-RACIAL SOCIETY IN AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE. THE ECONOMY WOULD BE SERIOUSLY DAMAGED AND THE CHANCES OF CONFLICT BETWEEN NATIONALIST FORCES GREATLY INCREASED. SOLODOVNIKOV SAID HE SAW LITTLE

LIKELIHOOD OF SUCH A RESULT. THE ARMED CONFLICT WAS NEITHER THE ONLY SOLUTION NOR THE DESIRABLE ONE--IT WAS MERELY A MEANS OF BRINGING GREATER PRESSURE ON SMITH TO NEGOTIATE. I EXPLAINED IN GENERAL TERMS THAT WE HOPED TO SEE A CONSTITUTION DRAFTED, A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT INSTALLED TO ADMINISTER AN ELECTION, AND INDEPENDENCE IN 1978. WE HAD NO PREFERENCES AS BETWEEN THE NATIONALIST GROUPS, THEIR LEADERS, OR THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE ULTIMATELY CHOSE AS LONG AS IT WAS PERMITTED TO MAKE THESE DECISIONS ITSELF. SOLODOVNIKOV NOTED THAT THOUGH THE SOVIETS SUPPORT NKOMO AND ZAPU, HE SAW NO REAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VARIOUS NATIONALIST LEADERS. NKOMO WAS CERTAINLY NOT A MARXIST AND KNEW NOTHING ABOUT COMMUNISM.

2. I NOTED MUGABE'S RECENT SPEECH IN PEKING WHICH SOLODOVNIKOV ACKNOWLEDGED IN TERMS OF THE GROWING  
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DIVISIONS AMONG THE NATIONALISTS. EVEN SITHOLE, HE SAID, IS NOW TRYING TO DEVELOP AN ARMED FORCE (I TOOK THIS TO BE A REFERENCE TO SITHOLE'S RECENT REPORTED CONTACTS WITH THE CHINESE AND APPARENT GROWING SUPPORT FROM ZIPA MILITARY COMMANDERS). SOLODOVNIKOV ASKED ABOUT THE REASON FOR RECENT RHODESIAN INCURSIONS INTO MOZAMBIQUE. I REPLIED THAT I SAW NO CHANGE IN POLICY REFLECTED BY THESE ATTACKS; THAT THEY HAD BEEN GOING ON REGULARLY OVER THE COURSE OF THE LAST YEAR AND A HALF; THAT THEIR RATIONALE WAS PURELY A MILITARY ONE; THAT THE RHODESIANS WERE PROBABLY SURPRISED AT THE INTERNATIONAL UPROAR CREATED BY THE MOST RECENT ATTACK; AND THAT WE SAW GREAT POTENTIAL DANGER FROM CONTINUATION OF THESE ATTACKS, PARTICULARLY IF THEY LED TO A MAJOR ESCALATION IN THE WAR EFFORT. I NOTED THAT THE GREATEST THREAT TO THE NEGOTIATIONS SEEMED TO BE THE POSSIBILITY OF SERIOUS ESCALATION FROM ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW WEAPONS OR INITIATION OF URBAN WARFARE. SOLODOVNIKOV APPEARED TO AGREE WITH THIS.

3. SOLODOVNIKOV ASKED FOR A REVIEW OF THE NAMIBIAN NEGOTIATIONS. AGAIN IN GENERAL TERMS I NOTED THAT THE

CONTACT GROUP FELT IT HAD MADE SOME PROGRESS IN ITS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS WHICH COULD LEAD AWAY FROM A TURNHALLE TYPE SOLUTION AND TOWARDS EARLY INDEPENDENCE OF NAMIBIA AND I NOTED THAT THE TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS STILL PRESENTED SOME PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD REQUIRE COMPROMISE ON BOTH SIDES.

4. ON LEAVING, SOLODOVNIKOV REMINDED ME THAT LAST SEPTEMBER HE HAD EXPRESSED GREAT SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCCESS OF THE KISSINGER INITIATIVE. THIS TIME, HE SAID, "YOU HAVE MORE EXPERIENCE" AND A BETTER CHANCE. "YOU MUST CONSULT CLOSELY WITH THE NATIONALISTS", AND HE ADDED, "I HOPE YOU SUCCEED".

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5. EARLIER IN THE WEEK, YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR DJURO VUKOLIC, WHO HAS BEEN HERE MANY YEARS, ALSO CAME TO SEE ME AT HIS REQUEST. HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NEGOTIATIONS SEEMED TO BE EVEN MORE POSITIVE THAN SOLODOVNIKOV'S. IN

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, HE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THE SOVIETS WANTED A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION BEFORE MUCH MORE TIME PASSED. HE ADDED THE INTERESTING THOUGHT THAT THE SOVIET COUNSELOR HAD MENTIONED TO HIS COUNSELOR THAT THEY COULD GIVE EVEN MORE SUPPORT TO THE NEGOTIATIONS IF THEY COULD BE GIVEN SOME TOKEN INVOLVEMENT TOWARDS THE END. VUKOLIC SAID THE SOVIETS ARE ANXIOUS FOR SOME RECOGNITION OF THE LEGITIMACY OF THEIR ROLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

6. COMMENT: AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, SOLODOVNIKOV IS ONE OF THE MORE SOPHISTICATED OF SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES IN THIS PART OF AFRICA. THE FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE SOVIET AFRICA INSTITUTE, HE HAS DEMONSTRATED AN INTELLIGENT UNDERSTANDING OF AFRICAN PROBLEMS ALTHOUGH HE HAS NOT AVOIDED OCCASIONAL HEAVY-HANDEDNESS WHICH HAS BEEN RESENTED BY ZAMBIANS. WHILE WE IN LUSAKA  
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WOULD HARDLY QUALIFY AS KREMLINOLOGISTS, IT SEEMS TO US THAT THERE IS A DEFINITE LIMIT TO THE DETERIORATION IN THE SITUATION IN RHODESIA WHICH THE SOVIETS WANT TO SUPPORT. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THEY HAVE ANY INTEREST IN UNINHIBITED RACIAL WARAFRE, AND EVEN LESS IN STEPPED-UP ARMED RIVALRY AMONG THE NATIONALIST FACTIONS. THEIR PRESENT INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA MUST PRESENT A LESSON IN WHAT IS TO BE AVOIDED. THERE THEY ARE DEEPLY INVOLVED IN A SITUATION WHICH THEY CANNOT CONTROL AND WHICH CAN DO GREAT HARM TO THEIR INTERESTS ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA, AS WITNESS THE SHABA AFFAIR. THEY ARE ALIGNED WITH A POLITICAL MINORITY DOMINATED BY A RACIAL MINORITY AND THEY ARE OBLIGATED TO CONTINUED ARMED SUPPORT FOR A MILITARY CONFLICT WHICH IS OPEN-ENDED AND POSSIBLY EVEN A LOSING ONE. IN RHODESIA, ZAPU IS BASED ON A MINORITY TRIBE. EVEN WITH A MAJOR MILITARY BUILDUP IT WOULD HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME IMPOSING ITS WILL ON THE MAJORITY SHONA. THE SOVIETS WOULD HAVE EVEN MORE DIFFICULTY PROVIDING THE ECONOMIC SUPPORT WHICH AN ANTI-WEST AND ECONOMICALLY DISRUPTED INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE WOULD REQUIRE THAN THEY DO IN MOZAMBIQUE AND ANGOLA. AN EARLY SETTLEMENT WOULD STILL PROVIDE THE SOVIETS WITH WIDE CONTACTS AND A GOVERNMENT WHICH, THOUGH NOT PRO-COMMUNIST, WOULD PROBABLY MAINTAIN A CLOSE THIRD WORLD ASSOCIATION AND THE KIND OF ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH THEY COULD OPERATE TO PROMOTE THEIR LONG TERM INTERESTS.

7. FOR THESE REASONS, WE BELIEVE THE SOVIETS WILL PROBABLY

TEND TO BE CAUTIOUS IN SUPPLYING THE ZAPU FORCES WITH  
SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS AS WELL AS PERMITTING A COUNTER-STRIKE  
CAPABILITY TO MOZAMBICAN DEFENSES. WHETHER THIS POSITION WOULD  
GO SO FAR AS COUNSELING NKOMO TO ACCEPT A SETTLEMENT WHEN IT  
COMES TO THE DECISIVE MOMENT, WE CANNOT TELL, BUT WE ARE SOME-  
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WHAT ENCOURAGED BY THE ATTITUDE SHOWN BY SOLODOVNIKOV.  
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## Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
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